

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A computer system, comprising:
a central processor unit (CPU);
a programmable read only memory (ROM) coupled to said CPU, said ROM containing a digital image;
wherein said CPU programs its ROM during a system initialization by the CPU, wherein the system initialization further comprises a booting of said system;
a connection to a network and wherein, during the system initialization, said system sends a message to a server coupled to the network to determine whether an upgraded image is available for said ROM; and
wherein, during the system initialization, said system receives an upgraded image and flashes said ROM with the upgraded image before loading any portion of the operating system in a random access memory associated with the CPU if the upgraded image is available for said ROM.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said system receives the upgraded image from said server.
5. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said system receives a link to another server which provides the upgraded image.
6. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said message includes an indication of the version of the ROM's current image.
7. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said message includes an indication of the class of the ROM.

8. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said message includes an encryption key to be used to help assure the authenticity of the image.

9. (Previously Presented) A method of upgrading an image on a ROM, comprising:
performing a system initialization of a system containing the ROM, wherein the system initialization further comprises a booting of the system where the system further comprises a central processing unit (CPU);

while performing said system initialization, transmitting a message to a server to determine whether an upgraded image exists for the ROM; and

receiving an upgraded image and flashing the ROM during said system initialization before loading any portion of the operating system in a random access memory associated with the CPU.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 further including, during the system initialization, receiving the upgraded image from said server.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 further including, during the system initialization, receiving a link from said server, said link pointing to another server that contains said upgraded image.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein said message includes an indication of the version of the ROM's current image.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein said message includes an encryption key to be used to help assure the authenticity of the image.

15. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein said message includes an indication of class of the ROM.

16. (Previously Presented) A ROM image system, comprising:
a server;
a database accessible by said server, said database storing information regarding ROM images; and

wherein said server receives a message from a computer that is currently undergoing a system initialization to determine if an upgrade exists for the computer's ROM image, uses said information to determine if an upgrade is available for the computer's ROM image and transmits a response to the computer indicating whether an upgrade is available during the system initialization of the computer, wherein said response includes an upgraded ROM image, and wherein the upgraded ROM image is installed during the system initialization of the computer before loading any portion of the operating system in a random access memory associated with the computer.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) The system of claim 16 wherein said response includes a pointer to where an upgraded image is located.

19. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein said pointer includes a URL.

20. (Original) The system of claim 18 wherein said pointer includes an IP address.

21-26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) An enterprise computing system, comprising:
a plurality of computers, each having a programmable ROM;
a proxy enterprise ROM server to which the computers couple, said proxy enterprise ROM server communicating with a network external to the enterprise; and
wherein said proxy enterprise ROM server includes a first storage area for an untested ROM image update, and a second storage area for an approved ROM image update, and at least one of said computers, during its initialization and before loading any portion of an operating system in a random access memory associated with the at least one of said computers, checks the second storage area for the approved ROM image update to be installed in the at least one of said computers, wherein the approved ROM image update comprises the untested ROM image update that has undergone at least one suitable approval test.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 1, wherein the system sends the message to the server coupled to the network to determine whether the upgraded image is available for said ROM upon each occurrence of the system initialization.